The Use of the Lord's Prayer;

Vindicated and Asserted against the Objections of *Innovators*, and *Enthusiasts*.

Translated from the *French*-Original, written by Monsieur *D'Espagne*, a Learned Presbyterian.

K. *Charles* the I. Εἰκὼν Βασιλικὴ, *Chap.* 16. *Some men are so impatient, not to use in all their Devotions their own Invention and Gifts, that they not only disuse, but wholly cast away and contemn the* Lords Prayer; *whose great guilt is, that it is the Warrant and Original Pattern of all set Liturgies in the Christian Church.*

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THE TRANSLATOR To the READER.

ALbeit this and the laſt Age have ſeen more Controverſie in Britain, *about the lawfulneſs of ſet Forms of Prayer, than all former Ages have done all the World over; yet it could hardly been thought, that the Lords Prayer would have run the ſame Fate with Humane Compoſures. To obviat all poſſible Objections againſt the uſe of this Prayer, is the deſign of this little Treatiſe; which was Originally Writ in* French *by a learned Proteſtant Miniſter, who has likewiſe publiſhed a Diſcourſe of Popular Errors, with great Ingenuity. It's true, that the learned Doctor* Hammond, *Doctor* Falkner, Joſeph Mede *and others have ſufficiently vindicated the uſing of ſet Forms; but none has with ſuch brevity, perſpicuity and nervouſneſs aſſerted our Bleſſed Saviours Form, as our*

Author has done. It was well said by an eminent Member of the Westminster *Assembly*, God forbid that ever I should kneel down to my Devotions, and rise without saying the Lords Prayer; *And when some Leading Remonstrators in the West of* Scotland *begun tacitly to disuse it, the General Assembly Wrote a Letter, charging them with Innovation, and intreating them to return to a better mind: So that this Novel Practice is no true mark of a sound* Presbyterian, *but rather an evidence to the contrary.*

As for this Translation, it was undertaken at the desire of one, whose command I judged it a crime to disobey; and if it shall be any ways serviceable to undeceive well-meaning but misled persons, or to confirm others in their pious usage, I shall think my labour well bestow'd; but however, I am assured the few Hours employed on this Task, were not wholly thrown away.

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The Use of the

LORD'S PRAYER;

Vindicated against the Objections of Modern Innovators.

WE read in the Gospel, of the Lunatick Person, that the unclean Spirit wherewith he was possest, did *sometimes cast him into the fire, and sometimes into the water*, these contrary Elements. Me thinks there is a great resemblance of this in matters of Religion; for it would seem that the same evil Spirit makes it his work to drive men from one extream of Superstition into another. The Church of *Rome* in all her acts of Devotion affects an endless Repetition of the *Pater Noster*, out of an opinion that the words themselves, or the frequent reiterating of them, carries some secret Magical Vertue in it. Many now-a-days have run into the quite contrary Superstition, shunning the very words of this Prayer, as a Stone of stum-

bling, and Rock of offence. Others who dare not be so bold as wholly to condemn the use of this Prayer, yet startle to repeat it in their daily Devotions, and chuse rather to pass it over in silence. So that this Prayer is in a manner banished out of Families, and Publick Meetings where it used formerly to re-sound. This Light which was put upon a Candlestick, to give light to those that are in the House, is now buried under a Bushel. If it were discarded and laid aside only by Hereticks, or profane Wretches, we would tax them with Irreligion and contempt of our H. Saviour. But since these People profess themselves to be otherwise Orthodox Christians, we are no whit astonished at this Novelty, though formerly we would have abhorred it as a prodigious Innovation.

Now to state the Question aright; we are not so wedded to the Letter, as to condemn all other Forms of Prayer, or that we will not admit of any other expressions. But other Prayers may be said, and this not left unsaid. It's a bold adventure to attempt the total obliterating of the memory

memory of such a Prayer. A Prayer used hitherto in all the Churches of God Antient and Modern, throughout the Universal World. A Prayer endited by the Eternal Wisdom, our ever-blessed Mediator and Redeemer, who offers up our Prayers unto God, and is perfectly acquainted with all the secrets of the Fathers Breast. The most full and comprehensive Form that can be devised, and which contains all the reasonable requests which can be imagined. A Prayer, which is the Epitome, Mirror, and Pattern of all other Prayers. A Prayer, which reconciles wonderful brevity, with great copiousness and variety of *Matter*; As if it made a Camel pass through the Eye of a Needle. A *Prayer*, which contains more Histories and Mysteries than it does Words. In short, a Prayer the most Methodical, Emphatick, and Divine, that can be Composed. For all the parts of this Prayer are admirable for a beautiful Symmetry, regular Measures, and exact *Proportion*: All is full of Luminaries, which give mutual light to one another. One Article calleth upon another (as deep calls to deep): Nay,

theſe very perſons who diſuſe it, muſt confeſs that all the ingenious Men upon Earth, and all the Angels in Heaven were never able to frame the like on't.

Did then our Bleſſed Saviour give us this Prayer that we ſhould never ſay it at all? On the contrary, he tells us, Pray thus, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* To this it is anſwered, Chriſt bids us *pray thus*, that is to ſay, to this purpoſe, but not in the ſame words preciſely. Well, be it ſo! But when he ſays (*Luk.* 11. 2.) *When you pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*, does he forbid us to pray in theſe words. Becauſe he teaches us to ſay, *Our Father*, &c. muſt we inferr that we ſhould not ſay it? And it is ſilly to alledge, that if it were a Command, we ſhould uſe that Prayer conſtantly, and never ſay another. This is all one as if you ſhould affirm, we are not commanded to pray to God, becauſe the Apoſtle ſays, *Pray always*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. As if the meaning of this were, that we ought to do no other work at all but pray to God. But ſuppoſing it be not a Command, and that Chriſt has not enjoyn'd us to ſay this *Prayer* alwayes; neither has he forbidden

bidden us the frequent uſe thereof, far leſs diſcharged us ever to ſay it at all. It is a weak pretence, that it is ſufficient to expreſs our Saviours meaning and intention in this Prayer, though we repeat not his very words. For muſt we ſuppreſs his words, in order to expreſs his meaning? Or can we better expreſs Chriſts ſenſe and meaning, than by uſing his own words?

What can they then plauſibly object againſt the ordinary uſe-making of the Lords Prayer? Doubtleſs it muſt be this,

Either it is not lawful,
Or it is not neceſſary,
Or it is not expedient.

Let us conſider theſe in order. Is it unlawful to ſay this Prayer? This cannot be. for then it were unlawful to read it, nay we behoved to raze out theſe two Paſſages of Scripture where it it ſet down, *Mat.* 6. *Luke* 11. It ſignifies nothing to ſay, many abuſe it; This is the Argument which our Adverſaries adduce to hinder the common people from reading the Bible. If the Devil himſelf, and his Infernal Agents in their Charms, employ Sentences out of the Pſalms and Goſpels, ſhould

ſhould we wholly abſtain from uſing theſe Paſſages? If it be unlawful to utter them ſuperſtitiouſly, ſhall it be unlawful to uſe them devoutly? And if we are allowed in Prayer to uſe our own words, ſhall we be forbidden to imploy our Saviours Words, which are the Rule of ours.

It is therefore lawful; But, ſay they, it is not neceſſary. Suppoſe it be not neceſſary to ſay the Lords Prayer, is it neceſſary to let it alone? If it be indifferent to ſay or not to ſay it, muſt we for a matter of indifference bring in a diviſion in the Church, affect Novelty, break eſtabliſhed Order, and beget Scruples of Conſcience? Beſides, there are degrees of Indifference, as well as of Neceſſity. Would they ſay, that the uſing or omitting this Prayer, is in the ſame Rank of Indifferency, as the eating of, or abſtaining from certain Meats? Surely that which miniſters to Edifying cannot be wholly Indifferent. Will they ſay, that our Saviours words tend not to Edification? Albeit they dare not poſitively owne this, yet in effect their Arguing amounts to no leſs; For they maintain, that it is not expedient

pedient to ſay the Lords Prayer: This is the very Hinge of the Diſpute, and Pinch of the Controverſie.

Why then is it not expedient to ſay this Prayer in the expreſs words of the Holy Jeſus: What great inconveniencies do ariſe from thence? What prejudice to God's Glory? What hinderance to Man's Salvation? What ruine to the Churches Edifice?

Upon this Head they alledge.

That we ſhould not be confin'd to words.

That there is hazard of Idolizing the words, by ſaying them ſo often.

That our taking heed to the Syllables, ſtints the Spirit, & diverts the thoughts.

That this frequent Repetition is the vain babling condemned by our Saviour.

That this Prayer does not ſufficiently enumerat all our particular wants.

That it is differently worded by two Evangeliſts, to ſhow that we ſhould not take notice to the words wherein it is compil'd.

That the Apoſtles themſelves never made uſe of it.

That many cannot ſay it, but to their condemnation;

demnation; becauſe it obliges every Man to beg forgiveneſs of his ſins, upon condition that he forgive his enemies.

That it is not ſuitable to a dying man, becauſe he has no longer need to ſay, *Give us our daily bread.*

That it was never intended for a Prayer, but only for a Rule and Pattern of Devotion. And laſtly,

That in their daily Prayers, they comprehend the Subſtance thereof, albeit in different Words.

The general Anſwer to theſe Objections.

To all this, I ſhall in the firſt place return a General Anſwer, which ſtrikes at the Root of moſt of their Objections.

It is unqueſtionably evident, nor can theſe men deny it; That under the old Diſpenſation, God preſcribed ſet Forms of Prayer, and other religious Actions, to be repeated word by word. Such was the form wherewith the Prieſts bleſſed the People, as you may read in the 16 of *Numbers.* Such was the form of Thankſgiving, appointed at the Offering of the Firſt-fruits, *Deut.* 26. Such was the Prayer

Prayer and Proteſtation expreſly enjoyned thoſe that came to pay the Tithe of the third year, *Deut.* 26. Such alſo were the Forms of Prayer, which *Moſes* uſually ſaid when the Ark went forward, and when it reſted, *Numb.* 10. 35, 36. Of the ſame nature was the Form of Prayers and Thankſgivings, which were dayly ſung in the Church. For were not the *Pſalms* moſt part Prayers or Thankſgivings? and were they not commonly ſaid and ſung?

I ſhall not inſiſt upon this, that each Company of Singers, was expreſly tyed to certain Pſalms, as to a Task, which is clear from the Titles of theſe Pſalms. The 92 *Pſalm* was ſung every Sabbath-day, as the Inſcription plainly imports. Now conſider, why would God appoint Prayers, couched in Verſe, if it were not on purpoſe that they ſhould be ſaid *verbatim*? For it is well known, how difficult it is to change the words of a Line, that is ſetter'd in Poetick Numbers. Moreover, We have ſeveral Pſalms wherein God has appointed ev'n the obſervation of the Letters of the Alphabet. The 25 *Pſalm*, which

which is a Prayer, as to the ſubſtance, co-incident with the Lord's Prayer, begins almoſt every Verſe according to the order of the *Hebrew* Alphabet. The 34, the 111, the 112, and the 119 are of the ſame contrivance, eſpecially this laſt mentioned, in each of its Stanza's, anſwering eight times to the number and order of the twenty two Letters. It is viſible, God intended this expedient for a help to mens Memories, that ſo ev'n the moſt forgetful might eaſily retain the words of theſe holy Verſes, whoſe Initial Letters proceeded in an Alphabetick order. Would He then had them neglect the words, when he ordained the punctual rehearſing of every ſingle Letter? To this I might add, that ſome Pſalms (as for inſtance the 118 and the 134,) are penned by way of Dialogue between the Prieſts and People. This alternative Diſcourſe, conſiſting in reciprocal communication of the one with the other, could not be kept up without exact obſervation of the words of their mutual Intercourſe.

Beſides, In the Reformation of the Church by that good king *Hezekiah*, when the

he pubilck Liturgy was to be re-eſtabliſh-
d, the Levites were commanded to praiſe
he Lord with the words of *David* and
Aſaph the Seer; that is, to ſay or ſing the
very words of the Pſalms, 2 *Chron.* 29. 30.
It appears alſo, that at the Celebration of
the Paſs-over, there was a ſet Hymn al-
ways made uſe of upon that ſolemn occaſi-
on. And our bleſſed Lord himſelf, after he
had eat the Paſs-over, and was now pre-
paring himſelf for death, did not ſtick
to ſay it, and cauſed his Diſciples bear a
part with him in the recital thereof, *Mat.*
26. *verſ.* 30.

If our modern Bigots, who condemn
the uſe of the Lord's Prayer, had liv'd in
theſe days, I doubt me they would have
cenſured the wiſdom of God for preſcrib-
ing ſet Forms of Prayer, and obliging the
Church to ſay them word for word.

For the ſame Arguments, they muſter up
againſt the uſe of this Prayer, the ſame in-
conveniences they find in it, the ſame ſhifts
& evaſions whereby they decline the repeat-
ing it; All this might have been alledged a-
gainſt the Forms of Prayer, of Bleſſing and
of Thankſgiving which God impoſed upon

his

his antient People. Could they not hav
ſaid, that it was not fit to be confin'd t
the words of theſe Formularies ? and th
it was ſufficient to ſpeak to the ſame pur
poſe? that the Spirit ſhould not be limited
that by being taken up with words, goo
thoughts are loſt ? that theſe were conti
nual repetitions ? that theſe ſet Forms di
not expreſs all that was neceſſary to be de
ſired ? that there was hazard of making
Idols of them ? and in ſum, that it wa
expedient to ſuppreſs the uſe of them ?
'Tis a ſurprizing thing, that God Almigh
ty did not foreſee theſe Inconveniences.
ſtrange that theſe Perſons have not as yet
laid aſide the ſinging of Pſalms. For if
their Maxime hold weight, it is as ill to
ſing them, as to ſay the Lord's Prayer.
If we muſt not be tyed up to the words
of this Prayer, why ſhould we be tyed up
to the words of the Pſalms? If the Spirit
ſhould not be ſtinted, is it more ſtinted
by the words of this *Prayer* than by theſe
of a *Pſalm*? If the expreſſions of this *Pray-*
er divert the thoughts of him that prayeth,
cannot the ſinging of a *Pſalm* jumble and
diſcompoſe them too? If this *Prayer* ſhould

not

not be ſaid over and over again, if it do not ſpecifie all occurrences, if there is hazard of idolizing the words thereof; may not the ſame be ſaid of any *Pſalm* whatſoever? nay and much more. For we ſing many *Pſalms* which we are not ſo much concern'd in, or wherein we have not ſo great intereſt as in the Lord's *Prayer*. In them we meet with Prayers expreſly dedicate for the *Jewiſh* Church, relating to by-paſt occurrences, and which by no means reach unto us. There we have Petitions, Imprecations, Reaſonings, Complaints, which were divine in *David's* mouth, but in ours they are much more debateable than the Lord's Prayer is. Why then doth this Prayer go more againſt the Grain with us, than theſe Prayers contain'd in the Pſalms? Add hereunto, that the Pſalms, as they are ſung in our vulgar Languages, are the production of humane Induſtry, and the work of a Poet's brain; ſo that ſuch a Compoſure, tho never ſo excellent, is in no wiſe ſo divine as the Lord's Prayer: why then ſhall there be more inconvenience in ſaying the words of our Saviour, than in ſinging thoſe of

mens introducing. Furthermore, ſince i
ſtead of the Lord's Prayer, we judge
more proper to have Forms of our ow
Compoſing, or extemporary effuſions; wh
do we not, in ſtead of the Pſalms, dayl
compoſe Hymns purely new to be ſung i
the Church? Is it for want of Poetic
Raptures, that we are obliged to hold b
a conſtant tenor of Pſalms? Now if it b
edifying to ſay and repeat them in the
own proper terms, why not alſo the Lord
Prayer, which is the abſtract of all th
Prayers contained in the Pſalter.

But having ſaid thus much in anſwer t
theſe Objections in groſs, I come now t
examine each of them in retail.

Object. 1. They alledge in the firſt place
that we ſhould not confine our ſelves t
words.

Anſw. This Maxime taken univerſally
and without diſtinction, is falſe, and o
miſchievous conſequence; for if it ſhoul
hold, we muſt reject the reading of th
Bible, for in reading thereof, we muſ
keep cloſe to the Letter; we muſt no
tranſlate it, for in the matter of a Verſio
we muſt come as preciſely near to the O
rigina

riginal as is poſſible. A Paraphraſe is never ſo much to be truſted to, and the alteration of one word ſometimes alters the whole ſenſe. In ſacred Hiſtory, we muſt of neceſſity retain the proper names of Places and Perſons. In the Law we are bound to take care of the leaſt jot, and the ſmalleſt point.

2. But the Objection is ambiguous; for if they mean, that we are not ſo tyed up to the words of this Prayer, as to be precluded from uſing all others; Thus far we are both agreed. But if they mean, under pretence of this liberty, that we muſt neglect or lay aſide this Form of Prayer, we beg leave to diſſent from them. For, becauſe Chriſt allows us to uſe our own expreſſions, muſt we bury his? Becauſe our words are current, muſt we cry down theſe of the Holy Ghoſt? Nay on the other ſide, if ours be good, how much better are theſe, which he himſelf has taught us? ſo far ſhould we be from ſhunning the language of God, that on the contrary we ſhould do our utmoſt endeavour to make our ſelves familiarly acquainted with it. And I wiſh to God,

we were so well versed in it, that we could have it always in our mouth?

Object. 2. But here we are allarmed with a great danger; That by putting such a value on the words of this Prayer, it's to be feared we make an Idol of it.

Answ. 1. This is really a strange Paradox, that the words of this Prayer, which teach us to shun Idolatry, should be suspected by us as capable to betray us unto that sin. For this Prayer teacheth us to invocate onely, *Our Father which is in Heaven*, to ascribe *Kingdom*, *Power*, and *Glory* to him alone. May not these Folk as rationally conclude, that we are in hazard of idolizing the second Commandment, if we repeat it too often? Will we not make an Idol of that Command which forbids Idols? Sure I am the Church of *Rome* did not fall into Idolatry, by too frequent rehearsing the words of that Commandment, but by neglecting of them, nay expunging them out of her Catechisms and Manuals, which they put in the Laity's hands.

2. But may not one also turn an Idolater of the words of the Institution in Baptism?

tism? must we not turn them out of doors likewise, to avoid Idolatry? And are not the words of Consecration in the Eucharist, *Hoc est corpus meum*, lyable to the same peril? the grossest Idolatry in the World is bottom'd on the speaking these words misunderstood. Must we then let them alone altogether? or should we not use them as oft as we rehearse the Institution of the Lord's Supper? Nay I shall add further, the superstitious *Jews* made an Idol of the Name *Jehovah*, telling that the pronouncing thereof, was able to work the greatest Miracles, in so much as to remove Mountains; now should their Superstition hinder us from pronouncing the proper Name of God, or must we every day coin a new Name for the Almighty, lest his usual Name being too frequently uttered, become an Idol at the last?

3. Moreover, there is the same hazard in any other Prayer whatsoever, which is pretended in reference to the Lords *Prayer*. For cannot a man Idolize the words of a Form, though newly contrived? Do not we know that men are naturally fond of Novelties? And must we then wholly refrain

refrain the exercise of Prayer, to keep us entirely out of the reach of Idolatry?

Object. 3. Now follows another Objection, which aims at the making Christ contradict himself: For (say they) Christ has condemned vain Repetitions in Prayer; But so it is, the Use of the Lord's Prayer is a perpetual Repetition.

Ans. 1. Consult the 6 *Ch.* of S. *Matthew*, the 7, and following Verses. There you shall find our Saviour prescribed that Prayer, to hinder vain Repetitions, But *when you pray* (saith he) *use not vain Repetitions*, but *pray after this manner, Our Father*, &c. And shall we call that a vain Repetition, which is given us as an Antidote against vain Repetitions? Would Christ cure one Disease by another of the same nature, or cast out one Devil to bring in another?

2. Our Saviour doth not condemn all Repetitions, without exception; For he himself, when he was in his bloody Agony reiterated the same words thrice in one Evening, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*, Mat. 27.39, 40. And in the self same Psalm, (to wit the 136.) every

very Verſe ends with this burden, *For his mercy endureth for ever.* And theſe words are there ſix and twenty times Geminated.

3. What Repetitions then are forbidden? Such as are vain. Now they are vain, if we are of opinion that the multiplying of them has any vertue and efficacy in it. They are vain alſo, if they be void of Underſtanding, Faith, or Affection. But the Repetition of one Prayer, animated with that fiduciary and fervent application of the Spirit to God (wherein the Life and Soul of Prayer conſiſts) can never be vain. As on the contrary, a Prayer deſtitute of that Spirit, will certainly be vain, although it be once repeated, and no more. Beſides, if I may renew the ſame thoughts I had formerly, Why may I not reſume them in the ſame words, wherewith they were formerly cloathed? Perhaps there is as much vanity in the minutly reiterated ſighs of ſome Modern Zealots, as in the reiterating our Saviours Expreſſions.

4. Again, I ſtrange that theſe men pretend ſuch an averſneſs to Repetitions, ſince the moſt part of their Devotions are built

built thereupon. A Repetition consists not only in saying over again the same word, but also in inculcating the same thing, tho under various terms. Is it not a Repetition, if one having named Dirt, should a little after call it Mire? Or having mentioned a Sword, he should immediatly talk of a Rapier? Are not the Synonimies and Circumlocutions, wherewith their Prayers are stuffed, so many Repetitions?

5. Furthermore, it is observable, that the Passage objected to us (*Mat.* 6. 7.) doth not only forbid vain Repetitions, but also multitude of words? Why are not these people apprehensive, that the Prolixity of their Prayers, which are often equal in length to a long-winded *Preachment*, is as vain, as the saying the *Lord's Prayer* once over? Or is the *Prolixity* of their Devotions more contrary to vain babling, than the brevity of this? Peradventure, they'l put the Question, How many times a-day, or in one hour, must we say it? But this is all one as if they should ask how often must we pray to God. For we are commanded to pray always;

ways; not that God requireth of us an uninterrupted act of Devotion, but it ought nevertheless to be frequent. Moreover, the true value of our Prayers consists in weight, and not in number, or in measure.

Object. 4. Proceed we to the next Exception, which is thus couched. The words of him that prayeth should accompany or follow his thoughts: but during his attention to the Lord's Prayer, his good thoughts will go astray, and his mind will be diverted.

Answ. 1. This is a huge mistake, and 'tis an odd thing to say, that the words of Christ are diversive of good thoughts. Did they but understand this Prayer aright, they would not talk at this rate. Is it possible for us to have better thoughts in Prayer, than these which are wrapt in the words of this Form?

2. It is calumnious, I had almost said blasphemous, to assert that they betray the Spirit to wandrings and aberrations; whereas on the other side, they guide and regulate it. Can we marshal our thoughts better, than by putting them in the order chalked out by our blessed Saviour.

3. It is false and abominable, to say that the words by which we receive the Spirit of God, divert and turn aside the spirit of man. For this Prayer is a portion of the Evangelick Doctrine, *that hearing of Faith*, by which we receive the Holy Spirit, *Gal.* 3. 2.

4. Are these persons so replenished with good thoughts, that having bestowed whole hours in displaying their own Conceptions at their pleasure, they cannot spend two or three Minuts on the Lord's Prayer.

5. But if we must cashier the words of this Prayer, on pretence that they do not always jump right with the thoughts which may spring up in our mind in the act of Prayer, I would enquire at these Gentlemen, when anyone of them bestirs his Gift in publick, is he sure that all the thoughts of his Hearers will hit exactly to a Hair-breadth with his thoughts, or with the expressions he stumbles upon? it would be a difficult task for him in a throng Meeting to find me out one single man so perfectly concurring and unison with him; do not then his Auditors run the same risque to have their devout thoughts diverted by his

his expreſſions, or is it more diſturbing to hear a Prayer of our Saviours dictating, to which we have prepared and adjuſted our thoughts before hand, than to hear one of a mans compoſure, whoſe thoughts out-run and often ſtifle ours?

Object. 5. And this may ſuffice to boot for a Reply to the next Allegation made by them; The Spirit (ſay they) ſhould be at liberty, and not pent up within the narrow bounds of a formulary.

Anſw. 1. And muſt the ſpirit of man, in order to its freedom, be licentious and irregular? or is the ſaying the Lord's Prayer an intolerable ſlavery? God of his mercy grant us always the liberty of ſaying it.

2. This Prayer is apparently ſhort in words, but in ſubſtance it is of ſo large extent as to comprehend Heaven and Earth, the preſent Age and all future Generations. And are theſe men of ſuch a vaſt and unlimited ſpirit, that this cannot do their turn?

3. Or if it be a captivity to hear the Lord's Prayer ſaid, is the ſpirit of the Hearers more enthralled by hearing our Saviours

viours Prayer, than giving ear to the effusion of a meer man?

Object. 6. The next Objection we are amused with, is, The Lords Prayer doe not descend to particulars; it expresse our needs only in general terms; but they should, as occasion requires, be particularly and affectionatly pressed and insisted upon.

Anſ. 1. In all appearance, our Antagonists are afraid God does not hear them sufficiently, unless they point out with the Finger, and Decipher by Piecemeal, all their petty wants. And indeed, many in stead of offering up Prayers to God, seem to give him Informations, and that, under pretext of being particular. Severals also in naming particulars, do but vent their impertinence; and others by mistake, in stead of an Egg, pray for a Scorpion. I grant it is often necessary to be particular, but this requires great discretion, which is not every mans talent. General requests, such as these of the Lord's Prayer, may be compared unto Stars, which have a fixed seat and regular motion. But when we offer at things in

in Hypotheſi, we deſcend into the ſecond Region of the Air, where all is turbulent and variable, and you ſhall meet with a continual juſtling of Reaſons, like Waves toſſed by contrary Winds.

2. Beſides, If a man ſhould undertake to mention all the mercies needful or expedient for him, he ſhould never come to a cloſe of Praying. Can any perſon alive particularize all things requiſite either to his being or well-being? all the kinds of temptations? all the depths of Satan? all his own iniquities? *who can underſtand his errors?* (*Pſal* 19.12.) and moreover, all the neceſſities of the Church univerſal, and of every individual Member therein? how then ſhould we conclude our imperfect Prayers, and with what ſupplement to amend their lameneſs? undoubtedly we muſt have recourſe to general terms, under which all particulars are implicitely comprehended. As for inſtance, after having ſpecified ſuch and ſuch ſins, and not being able to make a plenary enumeration of all others, muſt we not ſay in general, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*? Wherefore I retort the Argument, ſince

ſince it is impoſſible for us to compile a Prayer including all particulars, we muſt neceſſarily make uſe of one whoſe generality is comprehenſive of all particulars imaginable.

Object. 7. But, ſay they, we no where read that the Apoſtles ever ſaid this Prayer.

Anſw. 1. This reaſon is not at all concluſive. A negative Argument is not to be drawn from Scripture in a matter of fact, which abſtracts from fundamentals of Faith. We do not find in ſacred Hiſtory, that the *Jews* obſerved the year of Jubile, one of the moſt material points in the Ceremonial Law; yet doubtleſs they did celebrate it, otherwiſe God would have infallibly challenged them for ſuch a hainous neglect. We do not read that the Apoſtles baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, & Holy Ghoſt, as they were commiſſionat to do, ſhall we thence inferr that they did not Baptize after this Form?

2. I ſhould rather argue thus, Chriſt dictated this Form of Prayer unto them; therefore they did uſe it. Is it credible that having deſired a Form of Prayer, and Chriſt having dictate them one, word for

for word, they never made use of it for all this.

3. And albeit they had not, the Apostles were endued with a Spirit which directed them in Praying, as well as in Preaching. But dare we pretend to that infallible Spirit, which dictates such Prayers to us as it did to them? Are we sure, we do not trip, no more than they did, either as to Matter or Form?

Object. 8. In the next place, they ask us a Question. This Prayer, say they, is set down in two of the Evangelists (in the sixth of *Matthew*, and eleventh of *Luke*,) and that in different expressions; and which is more, the one of these Holy Pen-men omits what the other has: How then must we say it? whether as it is worded by St. *Matthew* or St. *Luke*. All this clearly demonstrats that our Saviour never intended we should adhere to the words of this Prayer.

Answ. 1. If this Argument took place, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper we ought not to use the words of Institution: For they are differently related in four different Books of the New Testament,

ment. So that one of the Evangeliſts in recording of them has omitted this important clauſe, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Should we then in this action totally reject our Saviours words, on pretence of this diverſity which is to be found in the Goſpels. St. *Paul* did not underſtand it ſo. When he ſhews the *Corinthians*, after what manner they ſhould celebrate the Lord's Supper, he tells them, *I received of the Lord, that which I alſo delivered unto you*, and then he repeats the down-right words ſpoke by our Saviour at the Inſtitution of that Sacrament, 1 *Cor.* 11.

2. It is a bad Inference, that we ſhould not take notice of the words, becauſe of the variety to be found in them. On the contrary, when God repeats the ſame thing in different words, we ought more carefully to obſerve them; For this diverſity gives light to the meaning of the Scripture, for example, when one of the Evangeliſts ſays, *Forgive us our Debts*, the other explains it by ſaying, *Forgive us our Sins.* We may indifferently lay hold of one or other of theſe Phraſes, both being equally dictated by Chriſt Jeſus. Is the choice ſo difficult

to

to make, or must we cast away both because Christ is the Author of them both?

3. As for that part of the Objection, that the Conclusion or Doxologie (*For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.) is left out by one of the Evangelists, the answer is easie. Its just as if we should argue, we must not celebrate the Eucharist because one of the Evangelists (to wit St. *John*) speaks not one Syllable on't. If this Doxologie is not to be found in St. *Luke*, must it be hudled up in silence, albeit it is set down in St. *Matthew*? or must we upon this account disuse this Prayer wholly, although it be recorded in both these Evangelists? There are several Psalms written on the same Subject, as 14 and 53 are coincident; yet there is some passage in the one which is not in the other; and must they both be sent a packing?

Object. 9. The next accusation against the use of the Lords Prayer is, that a gross absurdity is consequential thereupon. In it we pray for *our daily bread*. Now, say they, put the case a man be going to die, either gasping upon a bed of sickness, or upon a Scaffold, waiting the fatal

fatal blow, ſhould he ſtill petition for bread? To what purpoſe ſhould he pray for a thing he no longer needs, and which can be no longer ſerviceable to him?

Anſ. Several things may be Replyed to this Objection: 1. If this Petition ſhould only be put up by ſuch as are aſcertain'd of life, it could never be uſed at all: for theſe who are in the moſt perfect health and vigor, do not know but the next minut the night of death may overtake them: So that this would infer, Chriſt had taught us to ask that, which we ought never to ask.

2. As there is none who can promiſe himſelf the continuation of life for one day, ſo no man can tell if that day ſhall be his laſt. How many recover beyond all hope, when they are at the gates of death? Albeit then a man were on the very brink of Eternity, ſince he knows not the time of his departure, ſhould he boldly renounce his *daily bread*, and the Divine bounty which is the ſource of all his enjoyments, as if he were aſſured it was no further needful.

3. When we pray for *bread*, it is always

ways conditionally, in case we have further need thereof, in case our days be prolonged in the land of the living, and not otherwise. Nor is there any impertinence in this request, or is it not rather our duty to speak always thus?

4. It is well known, that this Petition is not restricted to food alone; for when I name *bread*, I presuppose all that is necessary to life, as Air, Respiration, &c. And may I not ask these things for the time I have to live, tho it were but one single moment, in order to the glorifying of God?

5. Grant he who is at the point of death needs not any longer pray for his *daily bread*, for all that, has he no more need to say, *Forgive us our sins, and lead us not into temptation?*

6. It is not Christs intention that any man should pray for bread to himself alone; but he commands us to pray for it to others, saying, *Give us.* If then a dying man cannot, or will not ask bread for himself, is he not obliged in charity to ask it for such as out-live him, and to pray for posterity?

7. And

7. And lastly, Because expiring sick men, or dying Malefactors, have no need of bread, must we thence conclude, that all others should abstain from praying for it? By the same reason they should cease to eat and drink.

Object. 10. Many also scruple to say the Lords Prayer, because it obliges them to say, they forgive them that sin against them. Now a man has not always an intention to forgive. This is a plausible Pretext: For if I entertain vindictive thoughts, with what confidence can I say that I forgive? Do I not make my self much more guilty by so speaking? For why, this Clause contains an Imprecation I make against my self, *viz.* if I do not pardon, I desire not to be pardoned. Pursuant to this, many whose office leads them to pray in Publick, abstain from this Prayer, lest any of their Hearers who joyn in Prayer with them should be found liars to God.

Ans. 1. Much surely may be said on this ticklish Question, whether or no a man who feels in himself any risings of hatred and revenge should suspend the use of the Lords

Lords Prayer: On this head, I ſay, if he cannot ſay this Prayer, neither can he make uſe of any other: So that to forbid a man the Lords Prayer upon this account, is to prohibite him the exerciſe of Prayer in any form or manner whatſoever. The Conſequence is eaſily demonſtrable by many reaſons. Firſt, he cannot make a good Prayer, if it be not conform (at leaſt in the ſubſtance) to the Lords Prayer. Now this Prayer obliges him to ſay, that he forgives his enemies, ſo that if he do not ſay it in theſe expreſs words, he muſt do it upon the matter. Beſides, can he offer up any Prayer without begging forgiveneſs of his ſins? And ſince that forgiveneſs is promiſed him only on condition, that he forgive others, can he ſeek or expect it on another ſcore? For *if you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes*, Mat. 6. 15. Nay, he cannot ask any thing elſe of God if he be not ready to forgive. If he bring his Gift to the Altar, he muſt firſt be reconciled to his Brother, otherwiſe all his offerings and all his ſupplications are of no value. Add hereunto, that

no man can offer up a Prayer without proteſting that he is willing to obey God; For when we beſeech God to grant us our will, we promiſe we will obey his. Now it is an Article of the will of God, that we forgive theſe who injure us. I ſay then, if Rancour and Malice hinder a man from ſaying the Lords Prayer, the ſame reaſon will juſtifie a total Ceſſation from Prayer. See what is the natural tendency of theſe mens opinion: For their Argument not only ſtrikes at the Lords Prayer, but alſo at all theſe which they themſelves are wont to conceive.

2. Now let us conſider the pretended hindrances: That man, ſay they, who in ſtead of forgiving, burns with revenge, whoſe ſoul is wholly plunged in Gall, and filled with implacable wrath, can ſuch a man ſay the Lords Prayer? To this I Anſwer, The Queſtion in hand is not concerning thoſe, who are entirely poſſeſſed with a Spirit of Revenge, and who have no deſign to abate of their Malice: But the Debate is concerning ſuch as through infirmity find it uneaſie to forgive, and feel in themſelves the Fleſh warring againſt

againſt the Spirit. If then I be, in theſe Circumſtances, can I ſay, *Forgive me my ſins*, ſince I find difficulty to ſay, that I *forgive them that ſin againſt me.* I Anſwer again; among the ſins I crave pardon for, I reckon this is one, the difficulty I have to forgive. I beg pardon for this, that it is a difficult thing for me to grant pardon. And I pray for Grace, that may enable me to forgive. So that the meaning of this Clauſe ſhortly is this, Forgive me, as I pray thou would grant me grace to be able to forgive. Can any man ſtumble at this? Nay, is not every Chriſtian obliged to ſpeak ſo? And it is to no purpoſe to alledge, that there is a great difference betwixt ſaying that we forgive, and ſaying, we deſire ability to forgive. For he who ſincerely deſires ability to forgive, has already begun to forgive. But if this forgiveneſs proceed only from a heart perfectly appeaſed, ſhall we abſtain from praying God till we arrive at perfection? Till we love our Neighbour perfectly, that is, till we have fulfilled the whole Law.

3. But after all has been ſaid, ſuppoſe

it

it absolutely unlawful to say this Prayer as long as a man is in the least provock'd with passion, is he therefore discharged to say it, when the smallest spark of anger is extinguished, and his heart is cleansed throughly from all hatred? If he be not in a condition to say it at one time, must he abstain from it for ever? And moreover, must the whole Body of the Church be interdicted the use of the Lords Prayer, for the sake of a few revengful tempers, that cannot use this Form. Must the peevish passions of some be a standing Rule to all? Finally, Is it well done of him who prays in publick, to accommodat himself rather to the malice of men, than to the prescription of our blessed Saviour?

Object. 11. Further yet, they plead for their excuse, that they comprehend the substance of the Lords Prayer in their usual Devotions, that they Paraphrase it, which is all one upon the matter, albeit they have not the same expressions.

Answ. 1. At this rate, they say not formally, *We forgive them that sin against us*; but they say it upon the matter. Now is there

there any greater inconvenience to say it in Christs very words, than to say it in equivalent terms? and so forth through all the rest of the Lord's Prayer: For seing they acknowledge, we ought to express its whole meaning, may we not use the words of it likewise?

2. On the contrary, when there is a debate about the commenting on a passage, it must be repeated *verbatim*, that we may see if the Paraphrase quadrat with the Text. Since then they paraphrase the Lord's Prayer; why do they not repeat it, that we may discern if their Paraphrase be agreeable to our Saviours words?

3. But again, are their Paraphrases of the same weight with our Saviours expressions? Is a Paraphrase on Scripture equally authentical with the Holy Scripture it self? The words of the Lord's Prayer are Canonical, for they are a portion of Sacred Writ. But these people dare not aver, that their Prayers, or the words of them are Canonical. For can a prayer of Humane Composure serve for an infallible rule to a Ministers Auditors? You'll find most excellent prayers in *Apocrypha*, both as to matter and

expreſſion? Why then do we not put as great a value on them, as we do upon theſe that are contained in the Canonical Books? The reaſon is, becauſe tho they were framed and conceived by men of great piety and deep judgment, yet they do not proceed from the Holy Ghoſt, in the ſame quality, perfection, and authority, as theſe that were pen'd by the Prophets, to which we dare not preſume to compare ours, far leſs to that of Chriſt's dictating. It is alſo weakly objected, *That at this rate we ſhould uſe no other Prayer but it.* For that is juſt as one ſhould ſay, it is not lawful to expound the Scripture, becauſe our Paraphraſes or Interpretations are by no means ſo authentick as Scripture it ſelf. We may paraphraſe the Lord's Prayer by other prayers, but we are no wiſe forbidden, under colour of our own paraphraſes, to repeat it directly as it is ſet down.

Object. 12. I come now to their laſt Objection, wherein they fancy they diſcover a vaſt deal of ſubtilty. The words of this Prayer, ſay they, were dictated for a pattern of Prayer, but not to be uſed as a Prayer,

a Prayer, they were intended for a Directory, not for a ſet Form.

Anſw. 1: This is nothing elſe but meer quibling, and a ſilly evaſion. Cannot theſe words be both a Prayer, and a Model of Prayer? Cannot a Building ſerve for a Model to another Building? are theſe things inconſiſtent?

2. It is to be remarqued, Chriſt ſays not, Pray to your Father, that his Name may be Hallowed, that he would give you your daily Bread. But take notice how he ſpeaks; ſay, *Our Father which art in Heav'n*; ſay, *Hallowed be thy Name*; ſay, *Give us this day our daily Bread*; ſay, *Forgive us*; ſay, *Deliver us*, &c. Is not this a down-right Set-form of Prayer? Can any body put his own words into our Mouth better and more expreſſly? or when Chriſt Jeſus appoints us to ſay them, does he mean the contrary, *viz.* that we ſhould not ſay them at all?

3. But ſuppoſing it was only given us for a pattern, and not for a Prayer; Theſe men confeſs, that when I pray I ſhould always keep the pattern in my Mind. If I ought ſtill to have it in my Mind, why

ſhould I never have it my Mouth?

4. If they refuſe to ſay it as a Prayer, why do they not at leaſt ſay it as a Pattern or Directory? If they ſhould thus addreſs God, thy ſon Chriſt Jeſus has taught us to ſay unto thee, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. are they afraid to lie in ſo ſpeaking? or do they fear that this truth is not fitly told?

5. I ſay, the people muſt be continually taught to pray aright, now it is beyond all contradiction, that 'tis impoſſible to make a good Prayer, if it agree not, at leaſt in ſubſtance, with our Saviours Formulary: Is it not then expedient that the people ſhould often hear that Formulary, that they may know by what rule to ſquare their Devotions. We blame the Church of *Rome*, that they do not rehearſe the ſecond Command to the People; becauſe this skipping it over hinders many from perceiving the Idolatry they are guilty of. And will not the ſuppreſſing of this Form cauſe the People, eſpecially a number of poor Creatures that cannot read the Bible, altogether forget this Prayer, and not know what rule is to be followed in their

their Addreſſes to God. In reality, theſe men do their utmoſt to raze the remembrance of the Lord's Prayer out of the Minds of men.

For the Cloſe; Obſerve the difference betwixt the Lord's Prayer, and our own Compoſures. There is, ſo to ſpeak, as wide a difference as betwixt the Tabernacle and the Pattern which God ſhew'd to *Moſes* on the Mount. The Pattern was Heavenly, framed by the Hand of Omnipotence; the Tabernacle was Earthly, patch'd up by the Fingers of frail man. The Lord's Prayer is all Celeſtial and Divine; our Devotions are in part the effect of Humane Induſtry, for we have not the Spirit in perfection. This contrivance of our Wit, is always Humane and Imperfect; but the Pattern is always perfect and Divine: no man breathing, is ſo learned or devout, but he is lyable to failures in the compoſing his prayers. They are ſubject to imperfection, exceſs, diſorder, and many irregularities. We are not impeccable on that ſide. We are always herein committing eſcapes, either by leaving out ſomewhat, or being too ſhort

upon

upon one point, and too prolix on another, or in setting down our thoughts confusedly and out of due order. But in saying the Lord's Prayer, I am assured, I cannot miss speaking right, that I omit nothing, that I vent nothing superfluous, that I do not extravague, that I am not guilty of rashness in my speech. Wherefore having conceived a prayer as well as I could, I consider its defects, and to make amends for them, I make use of that which I know is free from imperfections. I mean, that after I have offered up to God a prayer of my own making, I ought to beseech him to supply its deficiencies, and to that effect I present him that prayer which his well beloved Son and my Redeemer has taught and commanded to say, when I approach the Throne of Grace.

I conclude then, it is our duty to say the Lord's Prayer. We ought to say it because Christ put it in our mouth. We ought to say it, because it is the marrow and abstract of all other Prayers. We ought to say it, because it is the rule and pole-star to guide us in our Applications to God. We ought to say it, for redressing

the imperfections of all our other Prayers. We ought to say it, because of its universality, as to all purposes, persons, times, or places. It is a Prayer said by all the Churches in the World; and it is no small comfort to me to bear my part in such a general Harmony. 'Tis a Prayer I can make use of in Prosperity or Adversity, in Peace or War, in Sickness and Health, in Life and in Death. A Prayer that may be jointly said by Young and Old, Rich and Poor, Prince and Peasant.

Is it not an astonishing thing, that we are grown jealous and suspicious of our Saviours words? If our pious fore-fathers, who under-went so great sufferings to have the liberty of saying this prayer in a known Language, who took so much pains to teach it us, that we might have it always in our mouth: I say, if they could but look out of their Graves, and see us labouring even to forget that prayer, how severely would they rebuke us, and what names would they call us? But which is yet more, behold Christ Jesus himself expressly enjoyns you to say it. Whom will you obey, whether your Saviour, or these

who

who labour to perswade you to the contrary? Fear not, fear not to pronounce the words of Jesus Christ. Christ who dictated them will be your warrant at the Fathers hand, and will owne your words, since they are likewise his own. Let them be always carried about in your Hearts, and upon your Lips. I conjure you, my Brethren, by the reverence you bear to our blessed Saviour, by the veneration you should have for his words, by the love he has testified towards us in teaching us this Prayer, by the interest you have in praying aright, and by the peace and comfort of the Church, let none snatch this precious Jewel from you, which the Son of God has given you out of his own hands. And God grant, that we may with one accord always present our Supplications to *Our Father which is in Heav'n: For his is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, for ever and ever.* Amen.

FINIS.